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Letter dated 11 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Spain (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ana Maria **Menendez**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

03-46408 (E) 190803 200803

Annex to the letter dated 11 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Spain (July 2003)

Introduction

The numbers

July was a busy month. A total of 33 meetings were held during the month: 12 public meetings, 5 open briefings, 12 sessions of informal consultations and 4 private meetings.

During July, the Security Council adopted seven resolutions: resolution 1490 (2003) on UNIKOM, 1491 (2003) on SFOR, 1492 (2003) on UNAMSIL, 1493 (2003) on MONUC, 1494 (2003) on UNOMIG, 1495 (2003) on MINURSO and 1496 (2003) on UNIFIL. All of them were adopted unanimously.

The Council also adopted three presidential statements, on Ethiopia/Eritrea, Côte d'Ivoire and the follow-up to the reports of the missions of the Security Council to Central and West Africa.

Moreover the Council issued five statements to the press, on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Liberia.

The priorities

As an elected member of the Council, Spain has put into practice what it has always supported as a non-member: transparency, as exemplified in the number of public and open meetings held during its presidency of the Council; at 17, they outnumbered the closed consultations (12 sessions). Daily briefings to non-members after closed consultations as well as weekly briefings to its main constituency, the European Union, were held by the presidency.

As to the issues on the agenda of the Council, Iraq was the subject of a monthly open briefing at which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello, made his first presentation to the Council in implementation of the provisions of resolution 1483 (2003). In accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, three members of the Governing Council of Iraq participated in the meeting. Informal discussions continued after the open session in the course of a luncheon with the Secretary-General.

African issues figured very prominently in the Spanish presidency's agenda.

A session of closed consultations was entirely devoted to a briefing by the Secretary-General on the occasion of his participation in the African Union summit in Maputo, focusing on the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Liberia and the Sudan.

Western Sahara was an issue of high priority for the presidency. The triple objective of going beyond a mere technical rollover, supporting the latest Baker plan and reaching consensus was achieved, after laborious negotiations, through the adoption of resolution 1495 (2003).

Three meetings were devoted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one open briefing focusing on human rights violations, a public meeting at which the High Representative of the European Union briefed the Council, inter alia, on the Interim Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia, and a closed meeting on the Panel of Experts.

Burundi, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Ethiopia/Eritrea were also discussed in informal consultations, as was Liberia on three occasions; on the last of the three, a draft resolution was introduced in response to two letters from the Secretary-General proposing the deployment of a vanguard force of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), followed by a multinational force and a peacekeeping operation. The Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire came to brief the Council at an open meeting.

Counter-terrorism was another priority matter. The three-monthly reports of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) were introduced and considered at two public meetings.

The practice of holding a monthly open briefing on the Middle East followed by closed consultations was maintained.

Africa

Western Sahara

During the month of July 2003, the Security Council examined the latest report of the Secretary-General on Western Sahara, in which he recommended that the Council endorse the peace plan for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara presented by his Special Envoy, James Baker III, and extend the MINURSO mandate, which was due to expire on 31 July.

On 11 July, the Council held informal consultations in which members considered the latest proposal of the Special Envoy. In the course of the consultations the delegation of the United States of America distributed a draft resolution which supported the peace plan and proposed a three-month extension of the MINURSO mandate. This text was first negotiated at three meetings of the Group of Friends of Western Sahara and then of another three informal, expert-level meetings of Council members.

Finally, after another session of informal consultations on 30 July, at which the main sponsor of the draft incorporated amendments to meet the concerns expressed by some Council members, inter alia, about the fact that no solution should be imposed on the parties, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1495 (2003), in which it strongly supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy and similarly supported the peace plan for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara as an optimum political solution on the basis of agreement between the two parties; and called on the parties to work with the United Nations and with each other towards acceptance and implementation of the peace plan. By resolution 1495 (2003) the Council also extended the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2003.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 7 July the Security Council held an open meeting to hear briefings by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand G. Ramcharan, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, on two reports (S/2003/674) about the events which occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in December 2002 and January 2003 in Mambassa, and on 3 April 2003 in Drodro, respectively.

On 18 July the Council held a public meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council heard presentations by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Amos Namanga Ngongi, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, Javier Solana. After statements by members of the Council, the representatives of Bangladesh, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda and South Africa made statements before the Council. During the meeting different aspects of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were addressed, such as the situation in the eastern part of the country including the European Union-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia, the future mandate of MONUC, and future challenges for the Transitional Government and the peace process in general.

On 24 July the Council held informal consultations on the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In his briefing, the Chairman of the Panel, Ambassador Mahmoud Kassem, updated the Council on the Panel's interactions with Governments, companies and individuals concerned and on the situation of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Taking into account the complexity of the tasks included in the mandate of the Panel, he requested an extension of the Panel's mandate. A draft presidential statement was introduced to consider the extension of the mandate.

On 28 July the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1493 (2003), by which it extended the mandate of MONUC until 30 July 2004. The resolution provides MONUC with a robust mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and authorizes the increasing of its military strength to 10,800 personnel. It imposes an arms embargo on Ituri and the Kivus.

Central African Republic

On 15 July the Security Council held consultations to consider the latest report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2003/661). Members of the Council heard a briefing by the Representative of the Secretary-General, General Lamine Cissé, on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (BONUCA). General Cissé stressed the problem of security in the country, expressed concern about the human rights situation and made an appeal to the international community to resume assistance to the Central African Republic.

Members of the Council invited the Central African authorities to fulfil their commitment to organize an inclusive national dialogue and to respect the timetable

agreed for the return to constitutional legality, especially the holding of presidential elections before the end of 2004.

Members of the Council expressed their concern at the continuing insecurity and human rights violations in the Central African Republic. They insisted on the need for BONUCA to continue its inquiries into human rights violations and to continue to work to strengthen national capacities regarding the rule of law.

Members of the Council reiterated their support for the efforts of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the African Union. They called on all Member States to provide financial or logistical support to the multinational force.

Members of the Council called on bilateral and multilateral donors to provide support to the Central African authorities in order to bring about the return to constitutional order and a lasting peace.

Burundi

On 10 July members of the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Burundi. They heard a briefing by the Secretariat on the latest resumption of hostilities and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

Council members strongly condemned the offensive launched on Bujumbura since 7 July by the PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Rwasa) rebel faction. They called upon FNL to put an immediate and unconditional end to its offensive, and to enter into serious negotiations with the Transitional Government without further delay.

Members of the Council also called upon CNDD-FDD to stop resorting to violence and to refrain from any further action undermining the peace process.

They reiterated their call upon all the parties, especially CNDD-FDD (Nkurunziza) and FNL (Rwasa) and including the Transitional Government, to engage in good faith in the search for a peaceful solution through dialogue on all outstanding issues, and urged them once more to abide by the agreements they had signed.

Council members reaffirmed their support for the African Mission in Burundi. They commended the progress it had helped to produce so far in the cantonment of rebel combatants, and called on all concerned to provide, as a matter of urgency, adequate financial and logistical assistance to the Mission.

Members of the Council urged States in the region to exert their positive influence on the Burundian rebel groups and welcomed the proposal to convene, as soon as possible, a summit of the Regional Initiative to help in the resolution of outstanding issues.

Sierra Leone

On 14 July the Security Council held informal consultations to consider the latest report of the Secretary-General on UNAMSIL (S/2003/663). Members of the Council agreed that the Council should respond quickly to the Secretary-General's recommendation on the UNAMSIL drawdown. On 18 July, by unanimously adopting resolution 1492 (2003), the Council approved the recommendation of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 68 of his report. Therefore, the drawdown of UNAMSIL should proceed, according to the modified status quo option, towards withdrawal by December 2004.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 25 July the Security Council held an open briefing on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The Council heard a presentation by the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Seydou Diarra. At the end of the meeting the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/11), in which it reiterated the need for Ivorian political forces to implement fully and without delay all the provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the agreement signed at Accra on 8 March 2003. The Council took note with satisfaction of the formation of the government of national reconciliation and the progress made in the peace process so far.

The Council emphasized that much remained to be done to achieve the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and called on Ivorian political forces to redouble their efforts in a number of areas.

The Council reiterated its full support for the efforts of ECOWAS and France in contributing to a peaceful solution to the crisis, and called on Member States to continue to respond to the appeal made at the donors' conference in Paris on 18 July and to provide logistic and financial support to the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Council expressed its concern at the continuing existence of regional factors of instability, and requested the Secretary-General to submit recommendations to the Council as soon as possible on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems, focusing in particular on better coordination of United Nations efforts.

On 31 July members of the Council reached agreement on a draft resolution to renew for six months the authorization given to Member States participating in ECOWAS forces together with French forces supporting them.

Liberia

On 24 July the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation on Liberia. The Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, Jacques Paul Klein. Members of the Council expressed their concern at the continuing deterioration of the security situation and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Liberia. Council members emphasized that all parties to the conflict must honour the ceasefire and commit themselves to finalizing a comprehensive peace agreement as soon as possible.

Members of the Council reiterated that President Taylor must honour his commitment to leave Liberia so that a transitional government could be installed and peace restored. Members of the Council also urged Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) to immediately stop their indiscriminate shelling of Monrovia.

Members of the Council welcomed the imminent deployment of an ECOWAS vanguard force to Liberia, including two Nigerian battalions, and called on the international community to support the ECOWAS efforts.

On 30 July the United States introduced a draft resolution to authorize the establishment of a multinational force in Liberia followed by a United Nations stabilization force to support the transitional government and to assist in the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement.

Security Council mission to West Africa/follow-up to the reports of the missions to Central Africa and West Africa

On 9 July the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa (S/2003/688) was presented to the Council. On 24 July the Council held informal consultations to consider the follow-up to the reports of the missions of the Council to Central Africa and West Africa, and on 25 July the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/12) endorsing the recommendations made in the reports of the missions (S/2003/653 and S/2003/688) which fell within its area of responsibility. The Council invited the Secretary-General to follow up those recommendations which lie within his responsibility, and requested a report on the progress made by 30 November 2003. The Council intends to review progress in implementing the recommendations in December 2003.

Somalia

During informal consultations on 16 July the Secretariat introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2003/636) and briefed the Council on the latest developments in the region since the report went to print on 10 June. Members of the Council were satisfied to learn that Somali leaders signed a memorandum on 5 July that tries to put an end to the discussions on the Transitional National Charter. Members welcomed the agreement, which should contribute to completing the second phase of the National Reconciliation Conference. They agreed that the Council should show its support at this crucial stage. Members also showed serious concern about the security situation and the violations of the Eldoret Declaration, as well as the humanitarian situation. The President issued a statement to the press after the meeting.

Eritrea and Ethiopia

During informal consultations on 16 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations introduced the report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2003/665), and briefed the Council on the latest developments in the area. Members of the Council expressed satisfaction that the security situation remained calm, but showed their concern at the lack of progress in the demarcation process. They urged the parties to cooperate fully with the Boundary Commission. Members also regretted the absence of political contacts between the parties, and called on them to normalize their relationship through political dialogue, which is crucial for the success of the peace process. Finally, members showed their concern about the humanitarian situation, and the serious shortfall of resources received in response to the consolidated appeals. The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/10) at a subsequent public meeting.

Sudan

The Secretary-General briefed members of the Security Council on the state of the peace process in the Sudan and the efforts of IGAD. He mentioned that the Council could be asked to play a role in due course, should the peace process conclude successfully, in case a future United Nations presence were to be needed in the Sudan.

Asia

Myanmar

On 15 July, one delegation briefed the Security Council, under "Other matters", about the meeting of the Consultative Group for Myanmar with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Razali Ismail.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 14 July the President informed the Security Council of his meeting with the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Ambassador Pak had said that the position of his Government was expressed in the letter of 26 June from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (S/2003/673). The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recommended that negotiations restart between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Iraq

The Security Council held a public meeting on 3 July to adopt resolution 1490 (2003). The resolution reaffirms the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and Kuwait. Moreover it recognizes that the continued operation of UNIKOM in the demilitarized zone established under resolution 687 (1991) is no longer necessary to protect against threats to international security posed by Iraqi actions against Kuwait; the Council therefore decided to end the above-mentioned demilitarized zone, as well as the mandate of UNIKOM, on 6 October 2003.

The Council held an open meeting on 22 July to examine the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 24 of resolution 1483 (2003), in which the Council had requested the Secretary-General to report at regular intervals on the work of the Special Representative in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, with respect to the implementation of that resolution.

The open meeting was presided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain. The Secretary-General addressed the Council, as did his Special Representative. In his first address to the Council, the Special Representative complemented the report of the Secretary-General, describing the political process under way in Iraq since his arrival in June, with special emphasis on the establishment, on 13 July, of the Governing Council of Iraq, and matters related to security, law and order, humanitarian assistance, the oil-for-food programme, reconstruction, human rights, and access to information. In conclusion, the Special Representative stated that the United Nations and the international community could help the Iraqi process.

At the same meeting, the head of the delegation of the Governing Council of Iraq, Adnan Pachachi, made a statement.

All members of the Security Council made statements in the course of the meeting.

Middle East

Israel-Palestine

The Security Council continued to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. On 17 July, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Terje Roed-Larsen, briefed the Council about the situation in the region, prospects for the peace process and the implementation of the performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict presented by the Quartet; he expressed some optimism after the latest developments in the region. Most delegations echoed this optimism during the ensuing consultations.

Lebanon

On 31 July, the Security Council adopted, after an amendment was introduced to operative paragraph 4, resolution 1496 (2003), extending the mandate of UNIFIL for a new period of six months in response to the report of the Secretary-General. The Council reiterated the need for self-restraint on the part of the parties in conflict in order to avoid an escalation of tension.

Europe

Cyprus

On 24 July the President briefed members of the Security Council on the concern expressed by the Government of Cyprus about the latest developments in the island, especially the situation of Varosha. The Council reiterated its position on Varosha (resolution 550 (1984)) and urged the parties to resume a negotiation aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question on the basis of the Secretary-General's plan, as stated in resolution 1475 (2003).

Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro

On 3 July, during a public meeting in which several delegations took part, Council members heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Michael Steiner, who introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/675).

The Council members expressed their profound appreciation and thanks to Mr. Steiner on the occasion of his departure. While recognizing that participation for all had not yet been achieved in Kosovo, they noted the progress made towards the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999), reiterated their support for the "standards before status" strategy and stressed the need to build a democratic, multi-ethnic and multicultural Kosovo with full respect for the rule of law and human and minority rights.

On 24 July the Secretary-General informed the members of the Council of his intention to appoint Harri Holkeri as his Special Representative and Head of UNMIK.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 11 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 1491 (2003) authorizing the continuation for a further planned period of 12 months of the multinational stabilization force. The Council reaffirmed its intention to keep the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina under close review and welcomed the deployment by the European Union of its Police Mission since 1 January 2003.

Abkhazia, Georgia

On 21 and 22 July 2003 senior representatives of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General met for the second time at Geneva to consider the way ahead in the peace process concerning Abkhazia, Georgia. The meeting was chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

On 30 July the Council held a private meeting on this issue. The representative of Georgia also participated in the discussion. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Heidi Tagliavini, introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/751). The overall situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, was described as calm but still precarious. Members of the Council welcomed the constructive engagement of the two sides to continue their work on specific issues: economic cooperation, return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and political and security matters, following the two meetings at Geneva (February and July) and the summit of Presidents Putin and Shevardnadze in March. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that the core political issue — the future status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia — still has not been addressed. The hostage-taking incident of 5 June 2003 was strongly condemned and both sides were reminded of their responsibility to ensure safety and security for UNOMIG personnel at all times.

On the same day the Council adopted resolution 1494 (2003), by which it renewed the mandate of UNOMIG for a further six months, until 31 January 2004, and endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General that a civilian police component of 20 officers be added to UNOMIG, to strengthen its capacity to carry out its mandate and in particular contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Combating terrorism

Counter-Terrorism Committee

The Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (Spain) presented the three-monthly report of the Committee and its programme of work for the period from July to September 2003 at a public meeting on 23 July. By 31 July, all States Members of the United Nations, as well as two non-members, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and UNMIK, had submitted their first reports to the Committee, 147 Member States and the European Union had submitted second reports and 50 Member States their third reports. In the field of promotion of the signature and ratification by Member States of the 12 international conventions and protocols for combating terrorism, the Committee had carried out outstanding work: in 2001 only two Member States were parties to all 12 conventions while by 31 July more than 37 members were parties to the 12 conventions.

On the other hand, the Counter-Terrorism Committee had identified two challenges for the immediate future: first, technical assistance, which should have an increasingly larger role in the work of the Committee. Given the fact that some States, even when willing to comply with the provisions of resolution 1373 (2001), did not have the means to do so, it was up to the Committee to do everything possible so that those States were able to obtain the technical assistance necessary to fulfil their obligations. Both the donors' matrix and the assistance directory were being regularly updated, and the presidency and the Committee's experts remained in touch with States and regional organizations to develop programmes of technical assistance.

The second challenge identified was the strengthening of cooperation with the relevant international organizations for the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). This process would be reinforced with the holding of a meeting convened by the Organization of American States in Washington on 7 October 2003. The strengthening of cooperation had also taken the form of letters sent to those organizations, a fact that had contributed to improving channels of communication between the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the organizations.

Moreover, there had been initiatives to ensure adequate coordination between the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). A joint communiqué had been issued and presented to the media regarding the respective mandates, tools and working methods of the two organs. Regular meetings between the experts of both bodies were going to be held with a view to a fluent exchange of information.

Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999): al-Qa'idah, the Taliban and associated individuals and entities

On 29 July the Security Council held a public meeting in which many delegations took part. The Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), the Permanent Representative of Chile, gave his second oral report, including an assessment of Member State implementation of the measures imposed by the Council. The Chairman of the Monitoring Group was also invited to respond to questions by members.

Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz gave an update on the main actions taken by the Committee in 2003 and the recent activities of the Monitoring Group. He urged States to submit their reports pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1455 (2003) and pointed out that only 64 reports had been received by that time. He also stressed the importance of enhancing the interactions between the Committee and members.

The Council members recognized the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1455 (2003). They welcomed the improved coordination and increased exchange of information between the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee.